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ADVENTURES

of an

Escaped Union Prisoner

from

Andersonville.



By Thomas H. Howe.

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ADVENTURES
OF AN
ESCAPED UNION PRISONER
FROM
ANDERSONVILLE.

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RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE

“GRAND ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC,”

BY THEIR COMRADE

THOMAS H. HOWE,

102 N. Y. INFANTRY.

ADVENTURES

OF AN

ESCAPED UNION PRISONER

FROM

ANDERSONVILLE.

The Annual Encampment at San Francisco, Cal., of the Grand Army of the Republic has suggested to me writing the following account of my adventures on my escape from Andersonville Prison. I do so in the belief that it will prove of interest, not only to those, who like myself—still living—were so unfortunate as to have been cooped up in that horrible den, but also to many of the survivors of our great Civil War, now visiting San Francisco to celebrate the Annual Encampment of the Grand Army of the Republic.—THOMAS H. HOWE.

Although the ins and outs of Andersonville Prison have been fully described at different times, a few words of repetition here will not be out of place.

The prison and grounds, with stockade, occupied twenty-five acres, two hills with a six-acre bottom intervening, through which streaked a sandy stream, in average five feet in width and five inches in depth; this stream constituted our water supply. The stockade was square logs twenty feet high, with a dead line twenty feet inside, composed of slats, bordering upon its surroundings. The prisoners were formed into messes of ninety men each, then into detachments composed of three messes or two hundred and seventy men.

The writer, with fifteen others, was captured at the same time and from the same regiment, 102 N. Y. V., at the battle of Peach-tree Creek, before Atlanta, July 20, 1864. Eight of our lot died in Andersonville from the effects of scurvy, gangrene, exposure and starvation. What a frightful story would the complete history of that prison be, wherein thirteen thousand men gave up their lives to the preservation of the Union.

On the 3d day of November of the year that I was captured, the sick and dying prisoners were informed that they were to be exchanged. This news nearly crazed us with joy; but it quickly became known that the announcement was made merely to dispel the ideas of those who thought of trying to escape. At sundown of that day, these feeble prisoners, together with those who volunteered to care for them and were called nurses, of which I was one, were taken to the railroad station. When about half way from the prison, on our way to the station, where a box train was awaiting us, I took one look back at what was called "Andersonville bullpen," I muttered in my mind "Good-bye, graveyard; farewell, dead comrades, this is a resurrection for me if I can effect my escape ere they get us to Millen (our destination), another prison in Georgia," We were huddled into a train, which had recently been used for cattle. There were seventy of us in each car, including sick and disabled. About half-past seven the car gave a jolt and moved on toward Macon, sixty miles away. Here we arrived comparatively soon, being held over the balance of the night, weak, irritable and quarrelsome, as we were packed in like sheep. We started about nine o'clock the following morning for Millen, distant one hun-

dred and twenty miles. We made numerous long stops on side tracks. As night approached it began raining, and on inquiry I learned that we were only twenty miles distant from Millen. The moment has arrived, I said to myself, when I must endeavor to accomplish my purpose. Our Confederate guards covered the top of the train; they had just ceased singing and yelling "the bonny blue flag, the flag with a single star, etc." Their legs dangled over the eaves of the roof; the sliding side door was ajar about a foot space for ventilation; no Confederates were inside, it was no place for them. I consulted one or two of my comrades asking them to make their escape with me; they would not think of it. Wm. Wolgar, of Kalamazoo, Mich., overheard me, and we soon determined there should be "No Millen for us." We made our way to the opening, stepping upon the poor fellows who were stretched out on the floor of the car, getting their blows and curses. Wolgar was before me; it was dark and still raining. I had barely reached the side door when I realized that Wolgar was gone, and without a second thought I jumped. When I "came to" (I had been stunned by the fall) I found myself on the banks of the railroad, no car in sight, nothing to be heard, only the whistling of the wind through the high trees on either side.

On standing up, I saw I had received no material injury. I was free and thanked God I would be among the missing at roll call in Millen. I went back toward Macon and in a brief time met Wolgar, who was dripping wet from head to foot. He had jumped into a culvert and had heard shots fired from our guards. We continued walking back in the hope of reaching Atlanta or Sherman's army.

Our tramp lasted but a short while when we came across the trestle work over the culvert into which Wolgar had jumped. As far as we could see the water seemed to be two or three feet deep. We jogged along until we stumbled into the thick underbrush in the heavy forest. We were not over a ten minutes walk from the railroad when we felt that we must stop and rest, as we were weak both in body and in mind from the harsh treatment received during our prison life. How well we slept! The pelting rain mattered not; we awoke at daybreak. The glare of the sun through the branches enlivened us with renewed vigor. Our shelter from sight was a small skirting of timber near the white folks' house, and bordering upon a stream. The howling of hounds was very audible, so we concluded we had better "get." We soon crossed the stream on fallen trees, bringing us into big woods. Walking further on we struck a grassy lane, along which we were confident no one would see us. When lo! I saw and called to Wolgar to "look out there, you'll strike a 'Johnny.'" And sure enough a big Johnny Reb was the cause of our scoting off into the woods again. Therein we felt somewhat more secure. The weather was frosty and cold, the sky being clear as a bell. We were of good cheer and felt confident of ultimately reaching the Yankee lines. What's this? was remarked, as we discovered a small corn-field. Oh, ho! Everything was lovely. In we went amidst the long standing corn-stalks (dry and hard), to seek some stray ears. Some few were soon found. We craved for food, and devoured as best we could what we termed our "morning meal."

Continuing our journey, I spied a colored woman gathering sticks of wood, and out to our left was a

big open field, dotted with a plantation. As we approached, the colored woman dropped the wood and gazed upon us in utter amazement. We had on Yankee clothes, and she had never seen Yanks before. Tapping her upon the shoulder, I told her our situation. She then went out to the row of log huts, returning in half an hour with a large kettle of hominy. That hominy was acceptable, I assure you. It is needless to say it soon disappeared. A runaway slave—the colored woman's husband—showed himself, and “God blessed” every hair on our heads. He took us down into a ravine, built us a fire, gave us matches, and sat and talked with us all the afternoon. Every once in a while other negroes, of both sexes, would steal in to see us. We were Yanks; they had only heard tell of them, and were great sights to behold. They kept feeding us during the balance of the day, and we ate incessantly until night, our food consisting of roasted and boiled sweet potatoes, yams, potato pie, 'possum meat, rye biscuits, corn bread, oere coffee, etc. At sundown one negro returned, and took us to his cabin, where we were soon seated before a big log fire, eating supper, consisting of corn cakes, sage tea, etc.

As soon as supper was over we set to work to effect a disguise. We exchanged our Yankee garments for Southern homespun, woven upon the plantation. The transformation was complete; only our tongues upon emergency must help the deception. Three hounds were brought to the cabin, and with them and our negro friend we were guided three miles through the swamps, to what he called the Mill-edgeville and Atlanta State roads. The hounds would not now bother our trail; so we bade fare-

well to our guide, and very soon laid down in the brush to sleep, until the sunlight again dazzled our eyes. Our bodies were emaciated, and we dare not travel until dark. Sweet potatoes and corn bread! this was high living, and we enjoyed a picnic life (with a bath in a creek hard by) the balance of the day. Following the State road at night, we passed two Johnnies, the salutation being "good evening." About midnight we made the Ogeechee River bridge, and, ignorant as to its being guarded, walked over it and passed a sentinel-house. Nobody seemed to spy us, and the supposed guards must have been engaged drinking coffee or (fire) water, as we found out later.

Shortly before daybreak, we were awakened by some slave driving cows to pasture, and singing for dear life a Georgia coon song. I went to the edge of the timbers which sheltered us, and as I drew his attention toward me, he appeared amazed. Some negroes are very suspicious in different sections of Georgia, where strangers are seldom seen. I fixed it all right with him, however, and allayed his fears; so that he provided me with nearly two days' rations. We pushed onward, invariably at night, fed and advised by slaves. We found it the wisest policy to follow the railroad, as we should be likely to meet less white people. In a limited time we made the Oconee River, a large stream, the water of which, on either side of its banks, reaching far into the timbers. How should we get across? The bridge, including the trestle work on the opposite side of the flooded surroundings, was a mile long. On account of the guards, we must find some slaves, who might be cognizant of some canoe near at hand. We were fortunate enough to dis-

cover the right class. It was near dark; but he would come back, and take us to his cabin to supper. About nine o'clock, when everything was quiet, we were seated, enjoying a feast of roast pork, etc., the best we ever tasted. The room which sheltered our colored friend was small, but beautifully clean, and his very black wife seemed only too glad to do anything for us. She actually knelt down, and thanked the good "Lawd" that we were good people; we had no horns, and we were the colored race's friend; the bright star would be a beacon ahead, and lead us to glory. After supper we were escorted to a gin-mill, and ascending a ladder, discovered the second and top floors packed with loose cotton. In we crawled upon our hands and knees, to hide until we awaited the result of our colored friend's endeavor to secure a canoe. We laid ensconced and fed in our deep and warm cotton-bed for three days, as no canoe could be had. We then determined to wait no longer, so went down, and screened ourselves by the brush very close to the Oconee River bridge. We could see a guard high above us (as we were then in a ravine), pacing to and fro before the sentinel quarters. Six o'clock a train would be along, when a man would come to tell him when he could leave for supper. Then would be our chance to run the guard. He would be absent about half an hour; so we awaited coming events. In due time, a long train came booming along, and we could discern many "Johnnies" on its car-tops. They were a rough, ill-looking set. We must keep a sharp look-out. That fellow seemed a long time coming to give notice to that poor devil of a guard about any supper. But there he comes; we were too impatient. They disappear upon the

other side of the railroad. "Are you ready, Wolgar?" (to my comrade.) "Wait a minute." "All right!" And up we climbed the high embankment to the bridge. In haste, we were soon on the other side, running on planks upon a continuous angle over a long distance of trestle work. We thought of hounds when we made *terra firma*, and did not mind walking in a sandy stream for a long time to prevent them from tracking us. These dogs were very plentiful in Georgia, and a night never passed that we did not hear their howling and yelping. Every plantation seemed to have both them and men on guard duty; and the dogs were so taught that they could scent a trail or a strange footstep immediately. Woe betide the wanderer! The dogs, the whip-poor-will and the owl were our company at night.

We could tell by the square, white painted mile post how many miles we had walked a day; so by daybreak we discovered we had traveled over twenty-five miles since leaving the Oconee. We took to the wood (as usual) for a hiding place and slept a good sleep; perchance dreaming of home and our arrival there, and when it would be. We had a hard, long journey before us. We finally discovered we were in close proximity to Macon on the Ocmulgee, garrisoned, as we were informed, by some five thousand Confederates. We must now circumnavigate all places and towns along the railroad, as we would a plantation which oftentimes stood across our path or course, perchance it would be in the timbers, when near and sudden barking of the dogs would give us fair warning. When a plantation would be discerned we would have to get around pretty lively. Meantime we endeavored to waylay some slave on

the outskirts, even sometimes if we had to wait until daybreak. While they were at work or going to and fro on different chores, we would wait our chance in hope of getting something to eat and information. We saw it would be good policy to give Macon a wide berth, therefore went nine miles up stream in the cane brakes and came across a place called Low's Ferry. It was midnight and we discovered a canoe chained to a stake. The moonlight shone upon the rippling water. The ripples as they dashed against the canoe were the only sounds audible, and occasionally the fluttering of some disturbed bird or the hooting of an owl would break the monotony. It was as if we were in a dream, that death-like calmness over all, but in reality a romance, an adventure to save ourselves from death, or what was worse, Southern prison life. The deep forests on either side, with their thick foliage drooping heavily over the stream, made us feel as if we were in some weird grotto. By persistent efforts we loosened the stake, and embarking in our frail ship I commenced paddling across the Ocmulgee, then let it float as it would down stream. After landing a considerable distance below our embarkation, we struck across the country on an angle with the Macon and Atlanta railroad, which we discovered about thirteen miles from Macon. We reached the railroad about three o'clock in the morning. We tugged along the road until I said "Wolgar, excuse me, no further this night, let's seek a hiding place." He was the stronger and had more endurance and encouraged me to "brace up." I walked like a lame horse, my feet being badly swollen and blistered. About a half mile further settled it. We struck into the pine timbers to our left and found, as we sup-

posed, a pretty good hiding place. You can wager I was tired.

Daybreak came on, we were obliged to go deeper into the pine forest for safety. I bathed my aching pedals in a creek, which was wonderfully soothing to them. At nightfall two white men passed within four feet of us; they seemed to be hotly engaged in some domestic affairs; on they went, innocent of our close proximity. We watched and followed them a mile when they came upon a plantation. Just what we wanted to find, one upon a larger scale than any we had yet discovered. This was Dr. Winn's plantation, two miles from Crawford Station (or Howard) and fourteen miles distant from Macon. It was now quite dark and we were pretty well back of a boarded row of slave cabins; back of these still, in a pine timber grove, was a lone log hut. As it grew darker we approached this from the rear. We heard no noise and nobody was in sight. We took our chances; there was a dim light within; we knocked on the shutter.

"Who's that?" (the old boarded blind opened) "Who's that, I say," was demanded by a big, fat, but kind-hearted black woman named Rachel, as she thrust her head through the opened window. Matters were explained to her, and we found out that she lived there alone. She took observations and returned to tell us to come around to the front door, which we entered by walking upon a plank at a forty-five degree angle; we were soon inside. Supper was prepared for us and as we devoured the meal, Rachel sat smoking her pipe, sending great wreathes of smoke up into the room, while breathing heavily. She seemed to be in a deep study. All of a sudden she broke the silence

with the remark, "I will go out honeys but I will be back soon ; you can sleep in de bed all night." Going out, she muttered something about leaving the house in our care, and she knew where she could stay. We ate a good round corn-meal cake and some roast sweet potatoes, the room being lit up by a big blazing pine log. The room was not over capacious, the bed taking up half the floor. It was now nearly ten o'clock ; the door squeaked upon its hinges, and upon looking up we found Rachel had managed a surprise for us. Having informed her confidential associates of our presence they were all anxious to see us, and were willing to do what they could for us wonderful Yankees. Up they came in single file, and as they entered in turn their names were made known to us. First came Sally, a tall, fine-featured knowing wench ; a sprightly looking mulatto was Massa, and Tom a darkey in every respect ; Annette, a tall, long-haired, prepossessing mulatto. How glad they were to see us, to be permitted to talk and gaze at us ; how many questions they might have asked had we kept on answering. At last all was still. The white folks (we two) and all the black ones were sound asleep.

We were to remain in the cabin until Sherman's army came along ; they were on their way to Macon, which was not far away. They informed us of this, and more they had been told by some soldiers of Wheeler's Confederate cavalry, which had been causing much excitement all day. Great heavens, what startling news to us ! But we must keep quiet. Information and good meals would be brought to us at every opportunity offered.

While quietly awaiting the realization of this good news, numerous thoughts of a pleasant nature

passed through my mind. Sherman's army ! Saved ! Home, mother ! The deep, soft bed at home seemed so inviting. I was rudely awakened from these pleasant dreams by a strange noise outside. I arose, peeked through the keyhole, when, ye gods ! what did I see but a Johnnie Reb coming up the plank. I motioned to Wolgar to keep quiet. "Mum was the word." A mighty hard rap sounded upon the door. "Open the door in there !" was repeated again and again. "Excuse me," thought I ; "not much." He muttered some incoherent oaths as if he did not know whether to knock in the door or not, then finally strode away. Golly ! I felt much better ; not so much either when I gazed through the keyhole once again, and saw that the whole plantation was strewn with Wheeler's Confederate cavalry. It was no pleasant sight for us. We would much rather have been out in the woods. They were a good looking lot of healthy Southerners, and were bent on plundering, for they were helping themselves to skillets, spiders and all sorts of cooking utensils from the slave cabins. Some two hundred and more came under our sight. They were in and out of one place and then another, and no few of them stalked close by under our very noses as we peeked. Finally, we heard a tap on the rear shutter. It was Rachel. "Unlock the door, and get under the bed," she hastily remarked. There was a lot of cotton under the bed, making it a good hiding place. It is unnecessary to add that we obeyed her command. We laid there, and awaited coming events. In came three Johnnies. "How d'ye do, Auntie ? haven't you got something for us to munch on ?" To the last question she replied, "Reckon not ; was waiting to get some meal from white folks." Wolgar

and I did some thinking. What if they should pull out some cotton beneath the bed, just to see what might be in it? It would not be an unlooked for move, as it would look suspicious so *much cotton* under a big bed; but they went sort of easy on "Aunty," much to our relief, and took their departure after a little confab. In came another, and still another, merely to make a few remarks to "Aunty." The Johnnies finally mounted their horses and marched off to one side, departing for no one knew where.

We had stopped in Rachel's cabin one week, and still no Sherman's army put in an appearance. In point of fact, neither a white nor black person in this neighborhood of Georgia seemed to know anything of its whereabouts. In other words (as we afterward discovered), the people were fooled all along the line of the Macon & Atlanta Railroad as to Sherman's movements. We must pursue our journey, and perhaps be fortunate enough to encounter Sherman's troops. We were well rested, had new undergarments, two pair of *socks* (luxuries), and many other little comforts. No little commotion was manifested on our leaving. A jubilee was held in our temporary home on the eve of our departure. Through the generosity of good old "Aunty," Sally, Massa, Annette and a few others, we had a great feast. One brought this and the other brought that. An old Confederate haversack was given us, filled with four days rations and a good supply of tobacco and pipes. The start was to be made about nine o'clock; two negroes were to run away from the plantation, and accompany us to the Yankee lines. Their names were Wash and Arnold, and they were posted about the country as

far as Atlanta. As we departed many a prayer went up to the good Lord to guide and preserve us. We walked all night, and were deserted by our two black friends at daybreak. They lost their courage, and returned to their masters. A hard rain-storm came on, and the day proved dark and dismal, yet we passed it somewhat comfortably, with a good rest in a deep gulch, where the foot-prints of man had seldom, if ever, been. At dusk we commenced our usual night's tramp on the railroad. About eleven o'clock we started to go round a place called Barnesville.

I shall never forget the eventful night. On making a circuit we suddenly encountered in the woods sentinels to the number of three or four, gathered about a fire which was fast dying out. Upon being discovered we made a rapid exit with them in hot pursuit. Under these circumstances we were pretty fast runners, and came across a swamp with Wolgar in the lead. It was pitch dark, but on we ran as we could distinctly hear the crackling of twigs under the feet of our pursuers. They were nearing the swamp too. I was becoming exhausted, and had a severe pain in my side. All at once Wolgar cried out "lookout," and as he jumped over a ditch (and *such* a ditch) I went clean into the middle of it. I stood there like a tree stump waist deep in mud and water. I was apparently stuck fast, but I kept very quiet. Oh! if I could only get out and catch up to Wolgar, but no, he was out of sight. It seemed about ten minutes ere I got out of the sticky, slimy mud, and no Wolgar nor pursuers in sight. On I went, as best I could, into the woods only to hear, at last, the faint whistle of my comrade die away. One could not see his hand before

his face. I tried hard to attract his attention by whistling, but could catch no sound in reply. My God! we were separated! I stumbled against a rail fence; I listened; no noise of any kind. I decided to stop in the first thick brush I came across and await day-break, for I might do wrong by going on, as my comrade would not, in all probability, be inclined to widen the gap between us, but might adopt the same course as I had. In fact, he might be lurking near to see if he could not discover me in the early morning. Yet, I felt we would not meet again. After one month's experience of escaped life together, fraught with danger and trials, I was completely overcome with emotion. I sat down on a rail fence and boo-hooed for an hour. (I have never seen poor Wolgar since.) I must now paddle my own canoe. Let come what will, anything would be preferable to prison life.

I slept a very restless sleep that night, and was astir at early dawn. I did the best searching that I ever did in my life to trace my missing comrade, but I was doomed to disappointment. In my search, however, I came across a coal-black slave, named George Westley. He was posted as to the movements of Sherman's army, which was far away from us, and had gone through Milledgeville, and had made a feint at either Augusta or Macon with his cavalry, and had run over the Georgia troops at Griswoldville, and thence to Savannah. I now concluded to push on as best I could, get around Atlanta, cross the Chattahoochee River, and so on to the Federal troops who were stationed at Dalton. Westley, whom I called West, would go with me. He was acquainted with the country and its roads for many miles around. I saw his determination with

which I was well pleased. He would steal away at night, obtain some provisions, and we would soon leave his plantation far behind.

Such was the case. Next night we started to go around Griffen, sixty miles from Atlanta. At daylight, when half way around, I discerned a slave about half a mile away plowing on a side hill. We ventured on until we got close to him, and attracted his attention to my presence in the woods close at hand. As he came towards me, West came out from the brush. The understanding was, that he would bring us a dinner when he returned from his cabin at noon. As we indulged in our noonday meal, he told us he would leave work a little after sun down, it would then soon grow dark ; we should watch him, start a short time after he did, then to go to a certain skirt of woods which we supposed he had pointed out correctly. We should there find a gin house, and should wait until he came ; we were, however, not to become uneasy, as he might be detained in cooking something for us. Darkness began to hover over all, and we advanced to a timber belt, after penetrating the same we heard the howling of blood hounds, shortly they were close on to our heels, upon our trail. We espied a wagon house at a short distance ahead, into which we scampered, and no sooner had we placed ourselves behind an old wagon than four hounds stood directly in the doorway, which was very wide, and there they howled for dear life. We were in a nice fix, those hounds were bad ; such yelping, and such exhibition of teeth was all but inviting. We soon heard some one remark " come on out of there." I told West to stop where he was and keep quiet, while I would see what was up. Stepping out, I felt who ever demanded our presence (which

I supposed was what they wanted,) would go a little easy and stop the howling of the hounds. But no such spirit was manifested. Seeing a Johnnie, I saluted him with a "good-evening," and I actually did not care as much for the gun in his hands as for those never-let-go hounds. How hideous they were in their fury!

They only moderated their howls when I moved closer to my Johnnie acquaintance, an old bitter Secesh patroler; one sociable dog having hold of my pantaloons all the while.

"Who are you, and what are you doing here?" was asked me. "Well," said I, "you'll excuse me, I am lost. I belong in Griffen on guard duty." "Lost eh? I guess you are some d—n Yank, and have been hiding and feeding upon these premises."

Just at that moment, he fell like a log. "Master Thomas," was uttered by West, "come quick." We followed a road down a small hill, at the bottom of which was a sandy stream, which we followed for a long distance in great haste, to prevent the hounds from tracking us. We never heard more of the man than that his name was Turner, nor did the hounds bother us again.

While in concealment in the wagon house, West overheard all the conversation between us, and sneaking out unseen he stole up from the back and knocked Mr. "patroler" senseless with a club, a weapon we always carried. By break of day we had traveled quite a number of miles. We then lay down to rest near to, but hidden from the railroad, to start again at night-fall. When near mid-night, we discovered ahead to our right a log cabin, it stood alone on the banks of the railroad. There was a brilliant light within, West jogged along slowly while I continued

tramping to see what I could do toward getting us something to eat, as we had been sometime without food. Up I climbed to the top of an embankment and listened. I was unable to make out the occupants (although there was distinct conversation taking place within), whether they were white or black folks, as many of the whites talked very similar to the negroes. Suddenly the front door opened. I took the party for a mulatto woman, and upon approaching her was invited in, and to my consternation what did I behold but two white men and their wives. It was a pretty "cold night," and I must make the best of it. One fellow was a rebel officer and stood with his back to the fire, the other was the most knowing and communicative one, and was seated with ease in a large arm chair.

"Good evening," was remarked by all hands round. I went up to the fire and pretended to be very cold, saying at the same time, that I was going to Atlanta to see my folks, now the Yankees had left. I was asked the name of my people, and upon answering, was informed that they did not know any family of that name, although Atlanta was a large city. I then asked if it was "good walking along the railroad." No! Sherman had torn it all up, and the preference would be for the State road. I kept up the deception, as I thought (being disguised), pretty well.

Just as I was about to take leave of them, the party in the arm chair exclaimed "hold on! you are a Yank." I replied in the negative, and asked him what had put that into his head, that there was no Yank about me as far as I could see. *Now I know you are a Yank.* With that I satisfied him I *was*, at the same time preparing to bolt out the door, when

I heard one of the women remark, "are you an escaped prisoner?" I made an affirmative reply, when lo! my friend in the arm chair says, "young man don't be at all alarmed. I am a Northern man by birth, but have been in the Confederate army for three years, and now thank God I am out of it. I have been fighting against myself long enough. I was once well-to-do in Atlanta. Now look at my predicament, I'm *poverty stricken*, this is my wife, *this* is officer so and so and his wife. What am I going to do? Fight for this damnable cause and lose my life with no provision made for the support of my family? No! no more!" Hereupon he took a bandage from off his head and showed where the bushwhackers had fairly broken in his skull with the butt of a gun, because he would not become one of them. He was sorry for any prisoner who had been confined in "Andersonville bull-pen." Well, to tell you the truth, readers, we sympathized with one another, and tears came to my eyes when I saw him rally the *true* flag. I sat down to eat some hot corn bread and drink what was called coffee, made of burnt corn bread crusts. All this had been gotten in readiness whilst I was engaged in conversing with the injured man. I thought of West and took some bread away with me. I was wished a God-speed. They thought I had a hard road to travel and there were few negroes in the country. Those who had not gone with Sherman while in Atlanta refugeeed with their masters. The surrounding country was pretty well devastated, even the railroad tracks were bent and twisted into various shapes. Some of them represented army badges under Sherman. I realized we had better make as quick time as possible as we might not be so fortunate as to meet with more

negroes. West devoured my scanty supply of provisions with but little ceremony. We left many miles behind us ere early dawn.

About ten o'clock I concluded to take chances of getting around Atlanta by daylight, as we could not depend upon finding any negroes, on account of the general exit with Sherman's army. We now found great difficulty in finding sufficient shelter, and we also realized that four Johnnies were in close proximity. Where they had sprung from we knew not. Quickening our footsteps and gaining a curve in the road we incontinently took to the brush. They soon distanced us; we were not sorry to part company with them. On we toiled, until I became so confused I knew not whether we were upon the road to the Chattahoochee River, or otherwise. We soon came across an old man and an attendant engaged in the questionable pursuit of picking up old discarded Yankee clothing scattered along the line of Federal breastworks. I put on a bold front as I approached them to help my disguise. But the old man gazed at me with evident misgivings. My features were not of a Southern type, and no doubt my accent proclaimed me a Yank by birth and education. I told this hot blooded "Confed" (which he proved to be,) that "I was lost, belonged in Atlanta, serving as guard." He wanted to know if I had come in yesterday with Co. "F." "Yes, that's my Company," said I. "Ah, ha! that's it, is it, well, how came you so far from it then?" I replied, "out of curiosity, to take a view of the fortifications which one could discern for miles around." He informed me that the road running parallel with the breastworks (which I was now in) would lead me into Atlanta, three miles distant. He looked to be a good

smart old farmer, and again scrutinized me from head to foot. I took it upon myself to curse the d— Yanks, whereupon my friend was not at all backward in calling them sons of —— something or other (Hem).

“Do you see that spot over yonder?” asked he.
 “Well. I’ve helped take care of many of *our poor boys* there, that’s where the old hospital once stood. Nothing now remains to tell the tale but those ashes” (the hospital had been burnt to the ground.) I gratified him by cursing the Yanks harder than I ever imagined myself capable of. In case of emergency I trusted to West’s assistance. Of course the old fellow was not far from the truth in his suspicions as to my identity, but West and I were not to be captured easily. I learned he lived near the great burnt bridge over the Chattahoochee River. Good news! After he having promised me to call upon Co. “F” on the morrow, I jumped over the breastworks, followed the road around the bend and struck into the brush to find anxious West. We lay in hiding for awhile then followed closely upon his heels until we made Peach Tree Creek.

I was now at home with my surroundings, crossing a ravine I was on the very spot where I had been made prisoner nearly six months ago, and where fifty-six killed and wounded of the same regiment fell. Here I lay down ’midst the graves of those poor unfortunates, whose fate had been far sadder than my own. After the night’s rest, we resumed our journey to the Chattahoochee, arriving there about nine o’clock. To our dismay we discovered rebel pickets on the opposite side of its banks. How to get across without detection was the next consideration. To cross upon a raft that rapid

current would be certain capture, as it would take us too long to navigate ourselves across. In this case speedy action meant safety.

Three days and nights we remained on the banks of the stream searching up and down for a long distance in hopes of finding a canoe. Alas ! no boat of any description could be found. We were ravenous with hunger, and after searching a long time for something to eat we discovered two dried pig's ribs hanging upon a discarded rebel cavalry tent pole. Upon those two ribs and a dish of wild persimmons we were destined to dine for some time. I could not decide upon swimming across that freezing stream, knowing, as I did, that I should have no clothes to protect me from the bitter cold—it being December—besides I should be obliged to separate from West, he being unable to swim. And, let me assure you, readers, a second separation from a companion would not inspire me with hope and fortitude which was all that was keeping my spirits up. What should I do ? There was no certainty that the Yankees were stationed at Dalton, so even had I crossed the stream I may have only met with a disappointment. I did not relish being a wanderer in Georgia, so I finally decided to go back. With bowed heads and home-sick feelings we tugged along feeling more reckless than ever, owing to our misery. Where should we go ? Happy thought. Winn's plantation, where the slaves were so pre cautious, and had done so much for poor Wolgar and myself. I wondered where *he* might be now. Yes. I would go back nearly a hundred miles into Georgia and take my chances as to being cared for by them once again ; or else live in the woods to learn perhaps of some favorable news of the closing of the war.

I shall never forget when, one night in going back we stood beside a shed alongside the track. I was so tired I knew not what to do. On the other side of this shed, and right ahead of us, was a big bonfire, lighting up the fronts of four large buildings a short distance back from the railroad. West wanted to go around, but I insisted upon going straight ahead. We need not say anything and would soon escape the light cast by the fire. We could then strike off to one side in haste, and after reaching a secure place, and sufficiently distant from the fire, we could lie down the rest of the night, and resume our journey in the morning. So I argued, until I gained my point.

On we stalked, and we felt pretty sheepish when we discovered five Johnnies standing back of the fire. We were saluted with a "Hello!" "How are you, boys?" I answered. They appeared to imagine we would stop, but still, somehow or other, we were inclined to keep right on. West taking the lead as we penetrated into the darkness again. We gazed backward and discovered that they had left the fire, and two of them were coming our way in no little haste. Suddenly leaving the railroad we ran across the field ahead of them, until with a plunge I heard West go head foremost into a deep ditch. It was pitch dark. As tired as I was, I could picture his plight, and was obliged to give vent to my feelings with a hearty laugh. I have no better simile of his appearance (when I did manage to see him,) than the big and famous seal "Ben Butler," when he emerges from the water flipperty flop, on top of seal rocks at San Francisco.

We proceeded a few miles into the tangled woods, stopping to rest a little before sunrise. At mid-day

we came across a fine grove of persimmon trees, they looked beautiful, and were as large as good sized lady apples. We had not tasted food for quite a while, so began to fill up on them. Being satiated, we filled our haversacks. A heavy rain-storm set in about sun-down. We were now nearing Griffen, being exactly upon the opposite side from that which I took when going around it on my way to Atlanta. Suddenly we came in contact with a log hut. How it did rain! We were cold and soaked to the skin, and covered with mud up to our knees. We thought how we should like to be ensconced inside, as we stood beside its mud-dripping chimney. But no; the sounds of loud-talking white men caused us to reconsider our wish, and to move on. No rest for the weary that night. Yet, we were thankful we had escaped all danger so far, and for my improved health and powers of endurance.

Next morning the sun burst forth in all its grandeur and dried our clothes while we slept under the clear blue sky all that day. Nothing of any particular note transpired until going around Forsythe, when West and I came to an understanding. He was to go to one Joseph's plantation, at Forsythe, while I would continue on to Winns. Perchance we might meet again, but in all probability it was farewell forever. On I tugged as usual, through startling scenes and changes, to find myself comparatively soon an inmate of Sallie's boarded cabin (Winn's plantation); the last one in the row consisting of four, these being the abodes of the high-toned slaves, while there were numerous other cabins scattered about. After Sallie's came in rotation Lucy's, Ann's and Massa's, with their separate families. Sallie had seven children, Eliza, John, Walter,

Lucy, Dora, Paralee, and a four or five year old youngster as black as ink, called James George Thomas Beauregard. In several instances the surnames of the slaves on other plantations were of different parties though of the same family, they would bear the family names of others, as Robert E. Lee, etc., might be a son of Sallie Winn's. They would name their off-spring after whomsoever they pleased, as long as it was not that of a Union man, as they no doubt should have been pleased to do had they dared. Sallie was intelligent, and knew all the movements of the overseers (George and Jamison Winn.) Her family with the exception of Dora, Paralee and Beauregard lived in other cabins.

Sallie sheltered, fed and clothed me in her cabin nearly four months, and was never betrayed. How many slaves knew of my presence there? I never could tell, yet, Sallie was very particular as to who knew and who did not. Still, I imagined many knew of it, especially the last two months of my secretion there. There were one hundred and twenty slaves owned by this plantation, and all but seventy-eight were hired out upon the railroad. My hiding place or screen was behind the head of a bedstead, and under it, which stood in the left hand corner of the cabin, as one entered the door from the front. In the front of the cabin, in the left hand corner, was also a bed. In the center was a large old-fashioned hearth, with blazing logs and a kettle over the fire. In another corner was a bench with wash-basin and generally a bucket of cold spring water, these, together with a cupboard and table comprised the furniture of this particular cabin. The bedsteads were old-fashioned and high-posted with curtains around the lower portions; the space beneath

them being about a foot and a half from the floor. The head of the bed, behind which I was placed for security, had a string stretched across the posts and over this was thrown a sheet. The bed was drawn a sufficient distance from the wall to admit of a chair upon which I sat screened from view. There still remained an aperture, and had it not been for a press standing immediately in front of it I could have been seen by those entering the door. This press was far enough away from the bed to allow one with difficulty to squeeze through, this space being left to avoid suspicion.

These close quarters were to be my abode for nearly four months, not a very pleasant contemplation, think you. But much pleasanter than running the risks of recapture. The next preparation made was that of an exit for myself in case of emergency; this was done by loosening a board from the flooring, leaving a space large enough to admit me to crawl through. The cabin stood upon stone pillars two feet and a half from the ground. I would often satisfy my curiosity by peeping out from my secluded nook, as I had the advantage over those entering the door, they being unable to see me. I invented a window by knocking out a knot in one of the boards alongside of me, through which I could take observations of what might be taking place between the white folks house and the barn. This "hole in the wall" afforded me considerable amusement; while there it certainly was a big bonanza. There was so much to be seen which relieved my mind in its solitary confinement, to watch the overseers at this or that task, and the slaves who were always active, starting away, and returning each occupied with dissimilar avocations, which centred in and about the

big barn and its surroundings. Yet, no one, excepting Sallie was cognizant of a Yank ever beholding the entertainment that so much helped to kill his monotonous existence.

One quiet night, about eight o'clock (during my first week's sojourn,) Sallie kept a lookout while I was to be treated to a very nice supper. I was not aware of the programme, however, just yet. Dora, Paralee and Beauregard were clasped tight in the arms of Morpheus, so tight, in fact, that they were snoring. I was moping over the log fire, when in came Annette, the well-dressed and fine looking Creole, with long black waving hair, with a tray in her hands piled up with edibles. *Such* a supper! A feast for the Gods. When we parted I was given to understand that this would be my fare each night, provided the coast was clear. Annette did the waiting at table at the Winn's, in consequence of which I was oft-times provided with the best luxuries in the way of eatables.

Two or three days later I was seated in my corner gazing through my minute window, when I suddenly saw George Winn stop immediately in front of me, he was telling a negro named Wilson what he was to do. I had a good view of him now, and made myself familiar with his every expression. I thought to myself, if he only knew I was sizing him up for all he was worth, I, a fellow away from New York and an Andersonville prisoner at that, what a time there would be. He and Jamison were rank Secesh, but had twice deserted the Confederate forces. Behold you! he looks right up at the knot-hole. I imagine I am seen. It does not take long for me to slip underneath the bed should he come in to discover what suspicious eye he had seen glued to that knot-

hole. I was prepared to get underneath the house through my subterranean passage if needs be. But thank my lucky stars he did not detect anything, and shortly after strolled away.

When Sallie put in an appearance, I directed her to go around and try the experiment of noticing me at my window. She came close up to it before she could discern my eye, and said no one could ever possibly make out if they were unaware of my being there.

Annette continued supplying me with my very much appreciated supper, and one night asked me if I did not wish to take some exercise by walking. It was just what I needed, as I had had but little of that much needed article of late. I dropped underneath the house. It was a bright moonlight night, so I met her back of the well-remembered Aunt Rachel's cabin. We stalked into the deep pineries; were free from sight and to talk as we would, without fear of being overheard. On we rambled to the song of the whip-poor-will and the scampering of some disturbed and harmless lizzards about our feet, different species of which were numerous in Georgia. The beautiful tall pines and the moonlit path as we strolled across the shadowed land, reminded me of descriptions of paradise. We seemed to have walked about two miles, and, feeling somewhat fatigued, sat down beneath a large pine and told of each other's history. I learned more about slave life that night than in all my career before, my informer being a very intelligent person for her rank. We separated at a late hour, and returned to the plantation by way of Aunt Rachel's. Everything was serene, and as I crept into bed I could only hear the stentorian breathing of the occupants of our cabin, all being in Morpheus' oft sought arms.

A few days later, while seated in my corner, Lucy (our next-door neighbor) came running in and exclaimed, "Sall, Master George is comin'!" Sallie communicated this piece of news to me. As I kept my eye on the front door, I saw him enter, and thought I to myself, what's up, but imagined it was only for a little chat with Sallie that he owed this visit. He came directly across the room and sat down upon the bed which hid me from view. It is unnecessary to tell you readers that I remained as still as a church mouse, as all he need do was to turn his head and look back to discover my situation. During my stay upon the plantation I was in this predicament at least twenty times. Sometimes his manner and conversation were such that I was almost positive he would look back of him, if for nothing else than for the sake of making it appear he was of an observing character. Ofttimes I would cautiously creep under the bed to be in readiness to "scoot" from underneath the house should he manifest having any knowledge of my presence.

I shall never forget the sensation created by an act of a unit of the family. Winn was engrossed in some subject with Sallie, when young Beauregard (the unit above mentioned) came to the head of the bed and shook his little fist at me—the wretched black imp! as much as to say, "Ah, ha! I've got you now, if I want to act false to my teachings." Oh, thought I, if I could only get a hold of that little black piccaninni I would hurl him clean over the tree tops. Yet I suppose he was conscious his actions would not betray me, as luckily it turned out he was not observed. He merely took advantage of the chance to show how important he was to my remaining concealed in my corner. After George

Winn took his departure, I searched for "Master" Beauregard, but he was a little too wise; he no doubt thought it policy to absent himself until my mind subsided into its normal condition, if it were possible. Upon relating the coincidence to Sallie she immediately found Beauregard, whom she sent to me and called him to account for his misdeeds, with no little punishment in the shape of a taste of the cat-o'-nine-tails.

My monotonous existence was somewhat relieved (about one week after the above episode) in a novel manner, in the form of a jubilee gotten up by Sallie. A few slaves were invited from another plantation to join in a scuffle, which I was to observe unseen by those participating in the festivities. The jollity started in shortly after dark with a very old and inky black slave, who enlivened the guests and got them under way with the continuous repetition of one tune. As ten slaves, five of each sex and abreast of one another, met to return and fall back in line, with scuffling or dancing continually kept up to the song of "I likes puddin', I likes pie, I likes pretty gals around the body, fol, dol, diddledum, fol, dol, da," etc. Then, after a little, another would start up with, "You talk about your cotton, you talk about your land, I'd rather be a niggah dan a poo' white man," etc.

This hilarity continued upon the increase until close upon daybreak, when they desisted and took their departure. Their scuffling could be heard miles around. (I never made mention of good old Sallie's husband being on the other side of the divide whence no traveler returns.) Jamison Winn never made it a practice to visit the slave cabins.

I continued to take my evening ramble in the pineries, often accompanied by faithful Annette, who never neglected to provide for me, *when she could*, the same luxuries in the way of food which were indulged in by the white people. She even taught me how to knit socks. I completed two pair, but had considerable trouble to get through my obstinate brain how to turn the heel. Between Annette, Sallie and Massa, I was provided with a new suit of clothes woven by them.

Matters progressed without any stirring events until within the last month of my sojourn, with the exception of having been compelled to seek the woods two or three times, owing to the presence of patrolers in search of George and Jamison Winn, the deserters of the Confederate army, who would always, however, receive due notice of their approach and evade their searchers. At the last moment Sallie or Massa would notify me of the approach of the patrolers which would just allow me time to vacate the premises. They generally searched all the cabins. During the last month of my visit on this plantation, I hid myself in the woods through the day and returned to the cabin at night when all was quiet. I pursued this course as I feared too many knew of my presence and might possibly betray me. I had a secluded nook deep in a gulch beside a rippling stream. No one but Annette knew of my whereabouts, not even Sallie, who shared every confidence of Annette.

I enjoyed my romantic position immensely, except when the heavens wept, which would put a damper upon my spirits. The latter were soon raised again by an article provided for me by Annette in

the form of a draught from the bottle of rye whiskey, the pure white article distilled on the plantation, where I was becoming, as I feared, too well known.

Most invariably when the sun was in its zenith, the pervading silence would be broken by the crackling of some twig or the snapping of a sapling due to the approach of Annette with a hearty meal. I often imagined she had other reasons for admiring me than that of my being a Yank. She would always remain with me until the last moment. I often think of my abode amidst the deep foliage with faithful Annette as a companion, listening to the singing of the many-hued birds so plentiful in Georgia in the spring of the year.

One afternoon the rain came down in torrents. It was about four o'clock. When, behold! There came Annette with a calico dress and a sun bonnet slung over her arm. I wondered what it could mean. My curiosity was soon satisfied, for when she reached me she said, "Come, put this dress and bonnet on." The slaves were returning from their day's labor, and I had a chance to reach the cabin in this disguise, as I should be taken for one of them, and would soon be sheltered from the storm in my secluded corner behind the bed. I did not like the idea of dressing in imitation of a wench, and so said, "Annette, will you do me a favor; that is just to please excuse me." To make the story short, I was not listened to, and was made to get into that dress without further parleying. The d——l himself could not have recognized me in it. I thought to myself that this was a nice state of affairs, but then we had no time to lose, and went on boldly. We did not mind being in sight now, but struck out boldly and

fearlessly into the open country, hurried on until we overtook and mingled with the slaves on their return to their separate cabins.

I thought of my poor lost comrade (Wolgar), who no doubt imagined me stiff and cold ere this, as no communication of any kind had reached him about me. While nearing the cabins I began to feel somewhat nervous. What if they should discover me now?

The rain kept pouring down, for which I was in a measure thankful. The negroes concluded they would all jump over a rail fence and cut across lots. Such clambering! I never saw its equal before, and never expect to witness it again, not even in a circus. One slim wench said, "Look out dar, I'se comin'," and away she went. Such a muddle! She was so excited that she tripped on the top of the fence and floundered in the mud on the other side like a turtle. Another said, "See *me*, see *me*; lawda, honey, here *I* goes!" As she got astride the fence she became entangled in some briars. I enjoyed the situation hugely, and was laughing loudly, forgetful of my female attire, but was soon recalled to my senses, and discovered I had almost exposed my identity. Fortunately my back was turned and the others were so far in advance of us that they were not positive as to whom the hilarity owed its boisterous outpour. I changed my tactics very abruptly, and assumed a very feeble manner, getting through the fence under the lower rail.

On nearing the plantation, whom should I see but George Winn standing before the barn. I had to pass close by him, otherwise it would look suspicious, as the only way to steer clear of him was to leave

the lane we were tramping, along which was the shortest route and the best path leading toward the cabins. No bars were taken down from the inclosure unless for the passage of teams to the barnyard, consequently each one got over or under the fence. Close by stood George W. I don't suppose anybody made better time getting through that fence than your humble servant without showing their pedal extremities, for had Winn even got one glimpse of my feet I should have been a "goner."

My mind often wanders back to that time. I felt so desperate, that had anything occurred, I was perfectly prepared to fight, swim or travel. Every step onward counted. I was finally ensconced in my little observatory, where I partook of a good dram of rye and gazed out of my knot-hole window with no little relief.

The following night I was notified that two negroes by the name of Wash and Arnold wished to see me. "All right," said I; "let them enter, Sallie, and keep an eye open for new-comers." In they came, the very ones that had accompanied my comrade, Wolgar, and myself when we first left the plantation to find our way to join the Yankee army, then on its way towards Savannah.

My visitors had known of my being in their midst a long time, and it was owing to their shrewdness that Sallie obtained the information she from time to time imparted to me. Thus I had two unknown friends all this time, to whom I was greatly indebted. They bade me be patient, that I should be within the Yankee lines shortly; Wilson's cavalry was coming down to Macon, Ga., from Selma, Alabama. This certainly was startling news. They also saw

that I received a Macon paper occasionally, which kept me posted. A negro brakeman would throw one from the Macon train every morning as the railroad extended through the plantation grounds. The result was, I was in receipt of a paper about three times per week, which often afforded me gratifying news of the approach of Union cavalry.

Shortly before my departure from the life amidst the faithful blacks, while one day returning from the woods to my cabin, a confidential slave in my company, I discovered much commotion going on about the plantation. The white people were unusually active. Something evidently had occurred to disturb their calm. I imagined it to be caused by the approach of the Yanks. When near Sal's cabin, Arnold who was in advance, stepped back suddenly and told me to go to Massa's house (the other end of the row,) that my supper would be brought to me, etc. The place was all lighted up by a blazing bon-fire, and the blacks seemed to be about half wild. Arnold accompanied me in a half circuit around the back of aunt Rachel's cabin, and so on around to Massa's. When Arnold discovered an opportunity for me, I walked into the cabin. My supper stood waiting for me. I ate by candle light in a little front room, while Massa remained outside on guard. I was just beginning to enjoy the well-prepared meal, when in ran Massa almost breathlessly exclaiming, "Massa Thomas! quick, get under dat bed!" I had no sooner obeyed, than in walked a captain of the patrol guard. Massa immediately blew out the candle, when the captain said, "What's up, somebody's hidden in this house; I shall search it." He went out to obtain a couple of his patrolers, and

seeing three of them at the back of the cabin he commenced talking to them.

While he was thus engaged I took my chances, and ran out of the front door rapidly, and proceeded right up to the *white* folks front door. It seemed to be the only and best alternative. They would perhaps take me for one of his overseers (whom they were after.) I made a feint as if to enter, thinking they would come to search this place for me, as I afterwards learned they did. But instead of going *in* I scooted as fast as my limbs would carry me, and was soon half-way across a ploughed lot. After my dodging out of the door and getting beyond the glare of the light from the bon-fires, I was taken with a severe pain in my side, and could scarcely manage to walk. If they had pursued me, all they would need to have done, would have been to tap me upon the shoulder. I could have offered no opposition as I was so exhausted as to be unable even to speak.

I dragged myself along a little farther, until I reached a rail fence, where I laid down to rest for a little while. Feeling much better after my rest, I vaulted the fence and found myself on the State road which I followed but a short distance, when I imagined the patrolers were in pursuit, hearing confused conversation close behind me. Nearing an old negro church I passed through the unlocked entrance, hurried between the benches until I gained the pulpit, behind which I hid. It struck me as being a pretty *good* place to be discovered in. I heard several horsemen go by, but was loath to take my departure until an hour afterward, when I made my exit by jumping from the back window.

I then passed through three miles of woods until I reached what was called the lower plantation. A hut for the negroes, a crib for grain, and a shed for tools; these constituted the buildings on the plantation. The surrounding land was under cultivation. The remainder of the night was spent by me in the woods. At sundown upon the following day I detected Wash among the other slaves leaving their daily toil. I managed to attract his attention, and he came to my place of concealment, told me how they had taken me for George Winn, had searched the house, and being unsuccessful, had left in pursuit of him. He said we could go back to together, and when near Sallie's he would see if the coast was clear for me to pass unnoticed into the cabin. My safety was secured again, and I sat down to enjoy a hearty meal before a crackling log-fire about ten p. m. Delmonico's was nothing in comparison to that meal in *my* estimation. My enjoyment of this meal was coupled with a treat of a Macon paper, which was handed me by one of the numerous slaves now dancing attendance upon me.

Blacks unheard of and unseen by me before now came to my side to congratulate me. I wondered at the cause of this friendliness, and soon discovered it in reading the paper, which announced that the Yanks were not over forty miles away, and were heading towards Winn's plantation. The negroes rapidly became more impertinent and daring, and their masters became less exacting. Why? The Yanks were coming! Aye, it seemed heaven to them, and much discussion was indulged in by all hands.

My sleep that night was exceedingly restless. "Coming events cast their shadows before," they say. I knew not how soon I should hear the Federal bugle announcing the approach of our brave boys in blue. Daybreak found me wide awake studying every movement that came within range of my knot-hole. And, readers, make a little allowance for me if I say I was well nigh delirious with joy over much good news. I thought of the reunion with mother, home, sister and brothers, who no doubt thought me beneath the sod of the South. For just think, here it was April, '65, and I had been captured in July, '64. What pleasure to look forward to! I should in a measure resemble the resurreected, as I'd never been heard from, with the exception that I had been reported missing after the battle of Peach Tree Creek, before Atlanta. I received news that George and Jamison Winn were preparing to flee. My place of seclusion seemed now to be considered headquarters. I did not think the Winns had need of any apprehension, as in all probability they would not be molested.

During the afternoons the slaves would not work, and frequently we would hear of the Yankees being at such and such a place, so much nearer, etc., etc. All news was communicated to me as soon as it was learned. Finally there were so many assembled in Sallie's cabin that they began to scuffle and chant. Never had they been so over-charged with hilarity before; some became so excited over coming events that they could only give vent to their feelings by repeated and hideous yells. As night advanced bonfires were built all around the cabins,

the scuffling still continuing. As one stepped out wholly exhausted, another took his place.

Suddenly all commotion ceased for awhile to hear more news, as an old slave called Uncle Gabriel (who belonged to the plantation but lived in a log hut which stood north on a hill), put in an appearance. *He had seen the Yanks*, the glittering of sabres and the rapid advance of the Blue-coats on their fiery steeds, just at sundown. Great commotion prevailed again. He was almost out of breath, and they still kept plying him with questions; but he kept them somewhat in suspense for awhile, he being pretty nearly fagged out and had become so excited. As soon as he had discovered the Yanks he started on a run and came pell mell to impart his news. I could see his every movement from my observatory and reminded me of a horse with the heaves, he was so winded. When Massa asked him what was the cause of his derangement he burst forth with "Oh! doan' you bodder me, Yankees right in yer mouf, right in yer mouf; I say dar, colored folks, a *pile* of Yanks comin' *suah*." On went the scuffle, including old Gabriel, who was not to be outdone by any common negro.

While this was progressing Ann came rushing in with a "Massa Thomas, Yankees right on de road hyar." This caused me to show up suddenly from beneath the bed, to the surprise of no few negroes who were unaware of my existence, much less my presence in that room. Just as I was in the act who should enter the front door but George Winn. It was the first time he had ever caught a glimpse of me and then only for a moment, as I had soon disappeared under the house. Sallie having stooped

down as if to search for the white face, but in reality to replace my trap-door, so to speak. So before George Winn took measures to discover me, the supposed phantom had disappeared, aye, "vanished into thin air." I was later informed that he imagined me to be some disguised negro who was increasing the prevailing excitement.

After getting free from the house I hurried towards the woods, not forgetting to bid old aunt Rachel farewell on my way thither. I then went to the State road but failed to hear sounds of any description, not even the Confederate Gen. Wheeler's cavalry, who were supposed to be scampering anywhere and everywhere ahead of the Yanks. It was now about seven in the evening, and until nearly eleven I patiently waited the coming of some troops, but to be disappointed, so went back to a ravine a short distance from the road, where I felt I could take good observations should any one pass by. Soon footsteps could be heard approaching; it was Wash and Arnold in search of me to bear me this news: They had seen the Yanks too; while thus engaged in conversation we were startled with the approach of cavalry. Whether it was the Rebs or Yanks we knew not, so I told Arnold to inquire of them if the *Yanks* were coming; at all events we would be on the safe side in putting the question thus. He was to communicate their reply to me further down the ravine.

While awaiting the result of his inquiry, I heard the clattering of arms, and the greatest consternation imaginable. It was the Union Gen. Wilson's conquering band. I started for the troops, and by the time I reached the road the regiment of cavalry

had passed, excepting a member thereof who was anxiously awaiting me. He had been told of me and my being an escaped Andersonville prisoner. He said if I could ride he would take me on his horse behind him. Around about him there appeared to be about twenty-five or thirty slaves who had assembled there hurriedly to catch a glimpse of the Yank, and as I broke through the brush into their midst, they raised their voices with one accord, "Oh ! its Massa Thomas. Good-bye Massa Thomas, good-bye, we'll never see him no mo', etc., etc. He am safe in de Yankee lines at las', we so happy," and such similar remarks were heard around me as I leapt upon the horse behind my comrade. I bade them all farewell. Just as we were galloping off I perceived some one running after us. It was good Annette. I asked him to check his horse a little to enable me to speak to her. I bade her farewell, and "God blessed her," and then we separated forever. Our horse was very balky, and at intervals would commence bucking, and owing to the same I was taken with severe pains in my side, resulting no doubt from my long and close confinement. At all events I would not get off the horse, as I was bent for the Yankee regiment, which we found in camp two miles ahead. It proved to be the 4th Indiana cavalry, under command of Col. La Grange, being the advance guard ahead of the column. I was introduced to Brigadier-Gen. McCook, having proved myself to be an escaped Yankee prisoner from Andersonville. A captain was then requested to take care of me, to see that I had a good place to sleep, etc. This captain was the most unsociable chap I was ever unfortunate enough to meet ; he made but little of me.

I suppose he had some misgivings as to my proven identity on account of my rebel clothes. He however, procured an India rubber blanket and laid it beneath a tree and bade me lay down there beside him. That was the sum and substance of *our* conversation. I presume he was very much fatigued, for he soon slept soundly.

I must have fallen into a doze about three A. M., to be soon awakened by a sense of oppression, and upon opening my eyes, and gazing upward, discovered a large white horse standing directly over me. I did not appreciate this close proximity to the animal kingdom in my position, and concluded to sit up against the tree, and remain awake the rest of the morning, as I wished to be prepared to start with the rest at early dawn, which they frequently did at very short notice. As daylight began to assert itself, considerable commotion was apparent on the part of the early risers in camp. The first object which drew their attention was your humble servant, in his peculiar garb, squatting right in their midst; a person they had no idea of, a positive stranger sprung up from no one knew where. My presence was soon explained to them, when I immediately became a very welcome guest. What a treat this was for me to be once again among such men, making me feel so at ease (a sensation that had been a stranger to me for many a day). The only thought which annoyed me was how was I to procure a horse. The bugle would sound, and these men would be off in a few minutes, bent for Macon.

I decided to seek Gen. McCook. I soon found his headquarters, introduced myself as the party who had proved himself a Yank the previous night, and

asked to have a horse, if such a thing were possible. It resulted in my being presented with a plantation mule, saddle and bridle. When everything was in readiness the command, "Forward, march," was given. This induced me to mount my mule. I would have felt very well satisfied had it not been for some of the men who had an eye on me, as though they mistrusted me. Some there were who mistook me for a Yankee scout; but none felt as happy as I did, I'll warrant, in all their glory. As I took a survey of the 4th Indiana regiment I considered them to be the finest lot of able-bodied men that I had ever seen assembled together in my life, and thought they had few equals to withstand the onslaught (so far as their appearance was concerned). The whole cavalry division was soon in line, which numbered some 14,000 strong.

As I jogged along whom should I encounter but my old slave friend, West, who had fallen in with the troops the day before at Forsythe. It was a very gratifying meeting. I had never seen a negro so overcome with joy as this fellow was at recognizing me; so to give vent to our gratification, we took together a (God bless you) good dram of Old Rye, which he had in his possession. This was the 20th of April, 1865. I was informed the war had closed April 9th. This, indeed, was a surprise to me.

The troops continued on their rapid journey toward Macon, not being fully satisfied as to the rumors of peace being true; besides which, their destination was Macon, at all events. We arrived at Macon in a comparatively short time, to see it surrendered, under the Confederate Gen. Cobb, of Georgia, to Gen. Wilson. After the surrender, we

went into camp, where I made the acquaintance of a Yankee, who presented me with a Union outfit, which was the cause of my commanding more respect. I met a Southerner, who immediately recognized the merits of my plantation mule, and offered to trade me for a horse and twenty dollars in gold coin to boot, which I accepted very readily.

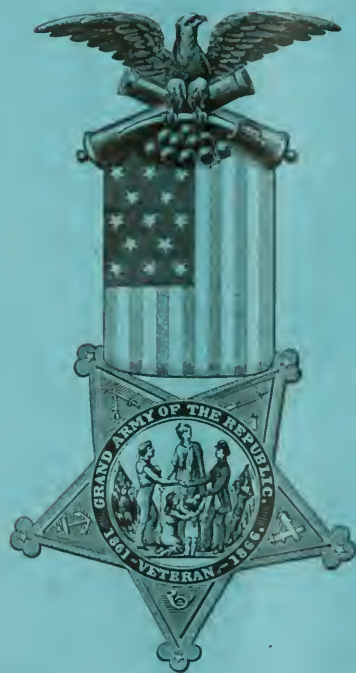
I remained with Company L, 4th Indiana cavalry, for four or five weeks, then obtained transportation to the North. Arriving in New York, I was honorably discharged June 25th, 1865. I now made rapid strides toward my home, where anxious parents did not expect me for a week to come, in Greenville, N. J., now in the limits of Jersey City, where can be observed on the bay of New York the finest liberty-pole on its shores in honor of my safe return.

About one month after this event I was called upon to be a witness in the trial of Wirtz, the keeper of Andersonville, who received his deserts on the gallows in the old Capitol prison yard, in Washington, D. C. Thus ended my adventures as an escaped prisoner. Your obedient servant,

THOS. H. HOWE,

Geo. H. Thomas Post,

S. F. Cal.



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